

## Is it safe not to immunize?

Although the diseases for which we immunize infants have become rare in the United States, they are still all too common in the rest of the world. The world does not share our wealth and ability to provide vaccines for its citizens. Since we hold that wealth, we are able to go to those countries and bring the diseases back to our country. The world's diseases could again spread among our under-immunized population. This scenario has been played out in England, Japan and other countries who have cut down on immunizations because of inflated fears of safety. Ask yourself if you are willing to put your child at risk of disease that could be safely prevented.

## When was the last time your baby had polio?

When was the last time your child had diphtheria, or tetanus or measles, or meningitis? These were once common illnesses of childhood, known to doctors and dreaded by parents. There is a reason why many doctors have never seen a case of HIB meningitis, measles, or polio; a reason why pertussis is not considered in the differential diagnosis of a cough illness. That reason is the widespread use of immunizations, starting very early in life. Immunizations have made a profound difference in the way we view infancy and childhood.

Do not hesitate to  
contact your  
Physician or Public Health Department  
Nurse if you are concerned or have  
questions.

Panhandle Health District 1 Offices  
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## Before You Choose To Not Immunize Your Baby, Know The Facts....



**Panhandle Health District**  
*Healthy People in  
Healthy Communities*

November 2006

## Why do we immunize infants?

- Infants are most at risk of serious complications and death from these diseases. It often takes several “primer doses” for the body to form sustained antibodies and these need to be in place to protect the baby as soon as possible.
- An infant’s immune system is intact at birth and able to recognize and form antibodies to dead or inactivated bacteria and viruses without getting the disease. Babies come equipped with passive antibodies from their mothers which offer some protection immediately after birth, but this immunity wanes and needs to be renewed through immunization and the formation of active circulating antibodies.
- There is no evidence that multiple shots overload the immune system and weaken it. Even infant immune systems are designed to handle and respond to the many assaults on it simply by existing in the environment.



## Is it safe to vaccinate infants?

- Vaccines have been thoroughly tested, especially since they are given such vulnerable individuals. Their manufacture and components are closely scrutinized by the FDA.
- Side effects are reported to the CDC for investigation through VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System).
- Safety is paramount. Several vaccines (notably DTP and oral polio) have been replaced by even safer vaccines because of concerns over real and perceived side effects.
- Rotavirus vaccine was removed from the vaccine schedule due to reported cases of bowel prolapse after the vaccine.
- Questions of safety are thoroughly investigated with multiple studies to try duplicate results of perceived harm.
- SIDS has never been shown to have a relationship with immunization other than that immunizations are started at the age in which Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is most common. In fact, reported cases of SIDS have been found to be caused by pertussis. SIDS pre-dates vaccination by about 3,000 years. The incidence of SIDS has been dramatically reduced by putting infants on their backs to sleep.

## Do vaccines really work?

- For the vast majority, vaccines prevent disease with minimal discomfort or adverse reactions.
- Even more pronounced reactions such as inconsolable crying or limpness following immunization, while frightening, resolve without harm.
- A few infants have a severe systemic reaction to the vaccine and should receive no further doses. They will need to be protected from disease by immunity in the rest of the community. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to predict which infants will have reactions, but it must be said, these reactions are very rare.

